

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 9
By Crowe

A RESOLUTION to recognize Arthur Byron Bowers on the occasion of his retirement.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this legislative body should honor those citizens who in their years of work have performed with uncommon devotion and enthusiasm; and

WHEREAS, Arthur Byron "Deacon" Bowers is one such estimable person who served with distinction for over 50 years assisting veterans and their families and has recently taken a much deserved retirement from his noble work; and

WHEREAS, a Regional Veterans Employment Representative since 1974, Mr. Bowers began serving veterans officially in 1968 as an employment representative for the Upper East Tennessee Human Development Agency, the forerunner of the present Department of Labor and Workforce Development; and

WHEREAS, earning the respect of his superiors and the public he served, Deacon Bowers ably conducted his many duties including the audits of 38 veterans outreach specialists in employment field offices across 55 counties that served thousands of veterans annually in finding gainful employment; and

WHEREAS, Deacon Bowers has been dubbed the "veterans ombudsman" aiding many a veteran with medical problems who was referred to him by personally seeing that each one received the appropriate contact at the VA Hospital; and

WHEREAS, born with a deep love of our great Nation, at the age of 13 Deacon Bowers enlisted in Company F of the Tennessee National Guard in Elizabethton but was booted out when the unit was activated for Korea and his age became known; he tried again six months later with the United States Marine Corps but was kicked out for being underage during basic training; and

WHEREAS, at the age of 15 he enlisted in the United States Army and was sent to Korea as an infantryman with the 25th Division, 35th Regiment just in time to celebrate his 16th birthday in November of 1952; he was honorably discharged from the Army on April 17, 1953; and

WHEREAS, a Golden Gloves champion boxer, trained by his coach and mentor Don Marshall, Deacon Bowers fought in the heavyweight division, 178 pounds minimum, and won the Upper East Tennessee Golden Gloves boxing championship in 1958 and 1959, was a finalist in the 1958 Southern Golden Gloves and champion of the 1959 Southern Golden Gloves as well as a quarterfinalist in the National Golden Gloves in 1959 – one round away from fighting the legendary Muhammad Ali; and

WHEREAS, continuing his love of boxing Mr. Bowers has served as a referee for the National Golden Gloves Boxing Association since 1961; for his remarkable achievements he was inducted into the Tennessee, Alabama and Georgia Boxing Hall of Fame and in 2000 became the first Tennessean inducted into the National Organization of Golden Gloves Officials of America Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, an active and important part of his community and local veterans organizations, from 1968 to 1974 Mr. Bowers served as manager of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Lynn H. Folsom Post 2166 in Elizabethton and is Chairman of the Elizabethton-Carter County Veterans War Memorial Committee, leading a \$265,000 fundraising drive for construction of the Veterans War Memorial; and

WHEREAS, in 2002 he was named Citizen of the Year for Elizabethton and Carter County for his service to veterans and the key role he played in the establishment of the Veterans War Memorial which honors the 256 Carter Countians killed in combat since World War I; and

WHEREAS, during his retirement Deacon Bowers plans to spend a part of each day observing the construction of the Veterans Walk of Honor, a granite wall that will have the name of a Carter County veteran, both past and present, inscribed on individual bricks along with a display of the flags of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps and Coast Guard plus the MIA and POW banners; and

WHEREAS, Arthur Byron Bowers exemplifies the spirit and allegiance to family and community that are characteristic of a true Tennessean; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Bowers is thankful for the loving companionship of his beloved wife Carol and is the proud father of three wonderful children, Donna, Julie and Paul, and devoted grandfather of Sarah Millsaps Presnell, Rachel Millsaps Williams, Adam Presnell and William Presnell; and

WHEREAS, throughout his estimable career, Mr. Bowers has demonstrated the utmost professionalism, ability and integrity, winning the unbridled respect and admiration of his colleagues; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we extend to Arthur Byron "Deacon" Bowers our heartfelt wishes for a happy and fulfilling retirement and every continued success in his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.